

CLIPPINGS FOR TODAY OCTOBER 25, 2024

A. MANILA BULLETIN:

Government seeks PPPs to combat climate change impact on agriculture

FAO: Women in Bangsamoro region hit hard by climate change, conflict

Negros Occidental logs P3.9-M damage to agriculture from 'Kristine'

B. THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Palay output seen hitting 4-year low

Kristine to hurt palay production – DA chief

Despite sufficient rice supply, farmers fear low prices after 'Kristine' losses

'Review FTAs to make higher salt tariff effective'

C. PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Kristine agri damage reaches P80.80 million

PH secures World Bank commitment to improve agri sector

World Bank pledges more support for PH

World Bank aims to double agribusiness commitment by 2030

Oriental Mindoro suffers P7.1M farm losses due to Kristine

D. BUSINESS WORLD:

AI seen improving ASF vaccine development

E. REMATE:

P10M agri damage ng Bagyong Kristine sa Bicol

F. THE MANILA TIMES:

Panay dams feasibility study nears completion

Farm clustering and consolidation

G. BUSINESS MIRROR:

House confident Senate will keep key 2025 budget items on food security, safety nets

MANILA BULLETIN:

Government seeks PPPs to combat climate change impact on agriculture

BY MANILA BULLETIN

Oct 24, 2024 12:07 PM

By DERCO ROSAL

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is turning to public-private partnerships (PPPs) to enhance agricultural productivity, which is facing challenges due to climate change.

During the World Bank Group annual meeting in Washington, D.C., Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu-Laurel Jr. emphasized the importance of infrastructure development, specifically storage facilities, to mitigate the effects of climate change on the agricultural sector.

He highlighted the potential for the agricultural economy to generate significant revenue while also ensuring food security.

However, Tiu-Laurel pointed out that “climate change has always been a very big challenge to the Philippines,” with frequent typhoons and shifting weather patterns such as El Niño and La Niña.

“So to address or limit the problem of climate change, we need to really invest a lot in the infrastructure and the logistics system of our food systems, or our food chain in the Philippines. So that’s a very big part—storage of everything,” Tiu-Laurel said.

At the same meeting, the World Bank reported that the agri-economy could generate \$5 to \$10 trillion annually by producing climate-resilient, low-emission, nutritious food while paying farmers fairly.

However, the challenge seen is that 80 percent of farmers lack access to finance, technology, and markets.

Tiu-Laurel said the government regularly collaborates with the private sector and stakeholders to develop a shared roadmap for achieving food security in the country.

“We’re not planning, but we want to have a merging of the minds so that both the private sector and the government have the same goal and will come up with the same roadmap to achieve the ultimate goal of food security,” Tiu-Laurel said.

“Of course, the financial institutions are also involved in this, as also part of the stakeholder in agriculture,” he added.

Tiu-Laurel said that the DA is working with state-run financial institutions, including Land Bank, Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP).

“And of course, the World Bank would be a big part of the equation. The World Bank would help the agriculture in the Philippines a lot,” the secretary emphasized.

As for the rice sector, Tiu-Laurel explained that increasing farmers' income requires higher yields through technology, improved farming techniques, and adjustments to cropping schedules.

All of which should boost farmers' income and reduce the country's reliance on rice imports.

“So it's a whole bundle of things that we need to do in order for us to be able to increase the income of our farmers, so that they become bankable, and so they would replant every season,” he further explained.

By DERCO ROSAL

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is turning to public-private partnerships (PPPs) to enhance agricultural productivity, which is facing challenges due to climate change.

During the World Bank Group annual meeting in Washington, D.C., Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu-Laurel Jr. emphasized the importance of infrastructure development, specifically storage facilities, to mitigate the effects of climate change on the agricultural sector.

He highlighted the potential for the agricultural economy to generate significant revenue while also ensuring food security.

However, Tiu-Laurel pointed out that “climate change has always been a very big challenge to the Philippines,” with frequent typhoons and shifting weather patterns such as El Niño and La Niña.

“So to address or limit the problem of climate change, we need to really invest a lot in the infrastructure and the logistics system of our food systems, or our food chain in the Philippines. So that's a very big part—storage of everything,” Tiu-Laurel said.

At the same meeting, the World Bank reported that the agri-economy could generate \$5 to \$10 trillion annually by producing climate-resilient, low-emission, nutritious food while paying farmers fairly.

However, the challenge seen is that 80 percent of farmers lack access to finance, technology, and markets.

Tiu-Laurel said the government regularly collaborates with the private sector and stakeholders to develop a shared roadmap for achieving food security in the country.

“We're not planning, but we want to have a merging of the minds so that both the private sector and the government have the same goal and will come up with the same roadmap to achieve the ultimate goal of food security,” Tiu-Laurel said.

“Of course, the financial institutions are also involved in this, as also part of the stakeholder in agriculture,” he added.

Tiu-Laurel said that the DA is working with state-run financial institutions, including Land Bank, Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP).

“And of course, the World Bank would be a big part of the equation. The World Bank would help the agriculture in the Philippines a lot,” the secretary emphasized.

As for the rice sector, Tiu-Laurel explained that increasing farmers' income requires higher yields through technology, improved farming techniques, and adjustments to cropping schedules.

All of which should boost farmers' income and reduce the country's reliance on rice imports.

“So it's a whole bundle of things that we need to do in order for us to be able to increase the income of our farmers, so that they become bankable, and so they would replant every season,” he further explained.

https://mb.com.ph/2024/10/24/da-pushes-for-pp-ps-to-boost-agri-productivity#google_vignette

MANILA BULLETIN:

FAO: Women in Bangsamoro region hit hard by climate change, conflict

BY KEITH BACONGCO

Oct 24, 2024 10:32 PM

DAVAO CITY – The prolonged crisis due to cycle of violence and impact of climate-induced flooding in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) could deepen gender inequalities, an official of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) said.



A FLOODED village in Maguindanao del Sur. (Contributed photo)

Dr. Lionel Dabbadie, FAO representative in the Philippines, said that the women's sector in the Bangsamoro region is bearing the brunt of the prolonged crisis brought about by climate change and conflict.

“Women, who already carry the dual roles of food providers and caregivers, are disproportionately affected. They are often the first to experience pangs of hunger, the physical toll of agricultural labor, and the psychological burden of displacement,” Dabbadie said.

A decade since the peace agreement between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front have been signed, clashes have led to the displacement of thousands of people across the region.

Rido or clan war is often the root of infighting between MILF members and armed groups. In some cases, armed confrontations are between armed followers of local politicians.

The situation is sometimes aggravated by the perennial flooding in communities spawned by monsoon rains.

These flood-prone communities are also the same areas that were once devastated by decades of conflict. However, when the peace pact was signed, they continue to experience displacement due to impacts of climate change and conflict.

“Imagine being a child born into this reality. Imagine witnessing your mother and your entire family go through this. On top of all this, imagine having your education be at risk because of the conflict,” Dabbadie said.

Children in these communities, he added, face health risks due to poor sanitation, especially during floods. “With limited access to clean water, they become more vulnerable to water-borne diseases.”

Dabbadie said a woman from a partner-community bared that children in her community would miss school due to flood.

He said that children could not focus on their studies due to the flooding. “They grow up with the constant fear of losing everything again.”

Thus, to help address the adverse impacts of the prolonged crisis, Dabbadie said that they have been implementing Resilient Livelihood Development projects to assist select communities in the region.

Under the project, FAO has been teaching communities how to utilize raw materials locally available throughout the year, particularly those that can be stored for several months without losing their nutritional value as well as applying their local knowledge in food production.

Dabbadie said the project is being implemented in known conflict-affected areas such as Datu Odin Sinsuat and Talitay in Maguindanao del Norte and in Guindulungan, Datu Saudi Ampatuan, and Shariff Saydona Mustapha in Maguindanao del Sur.

These areas regularly experience severe flooding since they sit on the periphery of the Ligawasan Marsh.

Many of their community partners adopted vertical gardening as an alternative farming method, Dabbadie said. However, some of their crops still end up destroyed as floodwater rises rapidly, especially in low-lying towns.

“This is how we know that the project beneficiaries have extraordinary resilience: Their experience of conflict and disaster have equipped them with the foresight as well as the drive to bounce back after every crisis,” he said.

Amid these challenges, Dabbadie said that their community partners remain determined to protect what they have worked hard for, especially food production.

“These communities are now producing sought-after goods that enable them to earn a living and serve their communities. In fact, there has been higher demand for their goods that they are also compelled to produce more.” The project has been expanded to the Indigenous Peoples communities of Teduray in South Upi town in Maguindanao del Sur.

The BARMM-Rapid Emergency Action on Disaster Incidence (Bangsamoro READi) reported that the recent flooding due to the trough of severe tropical storm “Kristine” has affected about 36, 000 families from both Maguindanao provinces.

As of Oct. 23, Bangsamoro READi reported that flooding also affected at least 145 hectares of agricultural land with an estimated loss of almost P2 million.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/10/24/fao-women-in-bangsamoro-region-hit-hard-by-climate-change-conflict>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Negros Occidental logs P3.9-M damage to agriculture from ‘Kristine’

BY GLAZYL MASCULINO

Oct 24, 2024 09:15 PM

BACOLOD CITY – The province of Negros Occidental logged P3.9 million in damage to agriculture from severe tropical storm “Kristine” as of 5 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 24.



THE City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office clears fallen trees in Puentevella Subdivision, Barangay Taculing, Bacolod City on Thursday, Oct. 24. (Photo courtesy of Bacolod CDRMO)

Rice and corn planted by 206 farmers in 10 areas incurred P3.2 million in damage; fisheries, P575,930; and livestock, P131,564.26.

More than 1,900 families or 6,800 individuals in 80 barangays in the province were affected by heavy rain. Twenty-nine houses were damaged, seven totally and 22 partially.

The Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council said one area remains flooded; five landslides were recorded and cleared, and 13 trees were uprooted.

Twenty-three local government units suspended classes as of Thursday.

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG)-northern Negros Occidental said 297 passengers and 261 rolling cargoes were stranded in four seaports as of 4 p.m. Thursday.

https://mb.com.ph/2024/10/24/negros-occidental-logs-p3-9-m-damage-to-agriculture-from-kristine#google_vignette

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Palay output seen hitting 4-year low

[Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas](#) - The Philippine Star

October 25, 2024 | 12:00am



The Department of Agriculture (DA) has further slashed its palay output projection this year to 19.41 million metric tons (MT), nearly a million MT lower than its previous estimate of 20.4 million MT.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The country's palay production this year could fall to a four-year low after rice farms were battered by a series of typhoons, before they could even recover from the ill effects of the El Niño phenomenon.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) has further slashed its palay output projection this year to 19.41 million metric tons (MT), nearly a million MT lower than its previous estimate of 20.4 million MT.

The latest production forecast is even 6.68 percent lower than the department's initial projection for the year of 20.8 million MT.

The DA's latest palay or unmilled rice production forecast could be the lowest output level since 2020 when the country harvested 19.294 million MT.

On an annual basis, the full-year projected palay output is 3.24 percent lower than last year's record-high harvest of 20.06 million MT.

Despite the foreseen decline in domestic palay output, the DA assures the public that the country would have sufficient rice supply until the end of the year with retail prices remaining stable.

Based on its latest estimates, the country would end the year with a carryover supply of 3.83 million MT buoyed by imported stocks, enough to cover nationwide consumption for about 100 days, according to the DA.

“This projection incorporates updated rice stock data, actual import arrivals, and historical trends, ensuring the country’s rice needs are met despite the production drop,” Agriculture Undersecretary Christopher Morales said.

Morales said the DA projects at least 358,000 MT of palay production loss in the fourth quarter based on historical damages and actual farming risks.

“The recent cut in tariff rates further incentivized imports, allowing for greater access to global rice markets and mitigating potential shortages,” Morales said.

The country’s palay output in the first half contracted by 5.5 percent to 8.53 million MT from 9.026 million MT due to lower farm yield as some farmers delayed planting amid threats brought about by the El Niño phenomenon.

The DA recorded close to 400,000 MT of production losses in the rice sector in the first half because of hotter and drier weather conditions as well as due to typhoons and related weather disturbances.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) earlier projected that palay production in the third quarter could fall by 12 percent on an annual basis to below 3.4 million MT due to crop damages caused by typhoons and smaller planted areas.

“The decrease in production would have been higher were it not for higher production yield due to better seeds, farm equipment and other support provided through the Rice Fund under the Rice Tariffication Law and National Rice Program,” the DA said in response to the PSA’s third quarter palay output estimates.

If the forecast of the PSA for the third quarter palay output materializes, the country’s palay production from January to September would reach at least 11.88 million MT, which is 7.4 percent lower than the 12.824 million MT recorded volume during the same nine-month period.

Local rice prices in Metro Manila markets remained stable as of Oct. 21 with regular-milled varieties ranging from P41 to P50 per kilo while well-milled ones cost P44 to P54 per kilo, based on DA price monitoring report.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/10/25/2395015/palay-output-seen-hitting-4-year-low>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Kristine to hurt palay production – DA chief

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

October 25, 2024 | 12:00am



The Guinobatan-Jovellar Road in Barangay Quitago Section, Albay is currently unpassable due to a landslide amid the continuous rain showers brought by #KristinePH on Wednesday, Oct. 23, 2024.

Rep. Fernando “Didi” Cabredo via FB

MANILA, Philippines — Severe Tropical Storm Kristine will hurt the country’s total palay production as the Department of Agriculture (DA) awaits reports on damage to the sector, Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said yesterday.

“Unfortunately, the effects of La Niña, particularly Kristine, will hurt our production as we are already at harvest period this wet season. It is sad news that areas ready for harvest have been reportedly flooded,” Tiu Laurel said.

“For now, we have to wait for the actual report to ascertain the damage and the interventions that we need to do to help our farmers and fisherfolk recover quickly from this calamity,” he added.

The DA has reported that the initial damage of Kristine to the agriculture sector has reached P9.75 million and it is expected to swell amid the impact of the cyclone in the Bicol region.

The damage and losses in Region 5 were reported in rice and corn covering 209 hectares of agricultural lands, with a volume of production of 598 metric tons (MT) affecting at least 234 farmers.

The DA added that the bulk of the damage was reported in rice production, totaling P9.6 million covering 203 hectares and with production loss of 203 MT.

The damage to corn was initially reported at P167,000 covering six hectares and with production loss of 7.5 MT.

The Masagana Rice Industry Development Program has forecast a loss of 358,000 MT in the projected palay harvest of 19.41 million metric tons this year, down from the total last year due to the dry spell caused by El Niño and increased rainfall because of La Niña.

15,000 rescued

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) recovered three bodies and rescued 15,000 people affected by the onslaught of Kristine.

“We were able to recover three bodies on Oct. 23. They were trapped inside their homes. The cadavers have already been properly turned over to their respective local governments,” PCG spokesperson Commodore Algier Ricafrente said over Bagong Pilipinas Ngayon.

“Based on our latest data, the number of individuals rescued by the Philippine Coast Guard reached more than 15,000, and this was done in collaboration with the local government units,” he added.

Many of those rescued were from Bicol and Batangas.

As of noon yesterday, the PCG monitored 6,843 passengers, truck drivers and cargo helpers stranded in seven Coast Guard districts.

Also stranded were 2,145 rolling cargoes, 107 vessels and 39 motorized boats. While 293 vessels and 291 motorized boats took shelter as a precaution against the inclement weather.

Ricafrente said that vessels might gradually be allowed to resume their travel hopefully today.

No work, no pay

Workers who will choose not to report for work during work suspension due to weather disturbances are not getting any pay, according to the Department of Labor and Employment.

But DOLE said employees should not be entitled to regular pay unless provided under a collective bargaining agreement or when employees are allowed to use accrued leave credits. Those who would report for work during calamities are entitled to regular pay for services rendered not less than six hours.

“If less than six hours of work, the employee shall only be entitled to the proportionate amount of the regular pay, without prejudice to existing company policy or practice more beneficial to employees,” DOLE noted.

Work in all courts in Luzon, including the Supreme Court (SC), Court of Appeals in Manila, Sandiganbayan and Court of Tax Appeals, was suspended yesterday due to the onslaught of Kristine.

Chief Justice Alexander Gesmundo authorized the suspension of work in SC via a memorandum issued by Deputy Clerk of Court and Chief Administrative Officer Maria Carina Matammu Cunanan.

The work suspension was in line with suspension of work in government offices and classes in both public and private schools in Luzon, as announced by Malacañang.

PRC humanitarian caravan

The Philippine Red Cross (PRC) will be sending a full-fledged humanitarian caravan to Camarines Sur and Albay, the provinces hardest hit by Kristine.

According to the PRC, relief trucks are being prepared to carry food and non-food items such as jerry cans, hygiene kits, sleeping kits and kitchen sets for the thousands of families in evacuation centers.

The Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) will be providing cash assistance for typhoon victims whose houses were damaged.

Under the Integrated Disaster Shelter Assistance Program, the DHSUD provides P30,000 cash assistance for those with totally damaged houses due to calamities and P10,000 for those partially damaged.

Meanwhile, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) yesterday announced innovations in the way the agency distributes relief goods for victims of disasters – through the new water filtration kits and ready-to-eat (RTE) food packs.

The water filtration kit, composed of a huge pail with a hose and accompanied by a filter system, costs more than P2,000 each and can accommodate up to a maximum of 1,200 liters of clean, potable water.

Another noteworthy innovation is the creation of ready-to-eat food packs. According to DSWD spokesperson Irene Dumlao, a box of RTE costs between P600 to P700, which includes biscuits, arroz caldo, champorado and canned goods as well.

The DSWD is already bracing for the low-pressure area spotted east of Mindanao, which the weather bureau said is likely to become a tropical depression. – **Mayen Jaymalin, Evelyn Macairan, Delon Porcalla, Elizabeth Marcelo, Rhodina Villanueva, Daphne Galvez**

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/10/25/2395095/kristine-hurt-palay-production-da-chief>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Despite sufficient rice supply, farmers fear low prices after 'Kristine' losses

[Dominique Nicole Flores](#) - Philstar.com

October 24, 2024 | 5:49pm



In this photo taken July 19, 2023 a worker prepares varieties of rice being developed by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) to be planted at one of its fields in Los Banos town, Laguna province.

AFP / Ted Aljibe

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) reported on Wednesday, October 23, that rice stocks are enough to last through the rest of 2024, despite agricultural losses brought by Severe Tropical Storm “Kristine” (international name: Trami).

Agriculture Spokesperson Arnel de Mesa, in an interview with state media PTV, said that the country is not "worried" about its rice supply, pointing to rice importation as a key factor.

“It is because of rice imports that have arrived and are expected to arrive. Based on historical trends, our stock inventory can still last up to 100 days after the end of the year. So, we are not worried about our supply,” De Mesa said in a mix of English and Filipino.

In a press release on Wednesday, the agency announced that the country anticipates a rice supply of 3.83 million metric tons (MMT) by the end of the year, sufficient to meet 100 days of consumption. As of October 14, the country has received 3.57 MMT of rice imports.

Meanwhile, the agency projects annual palay production to reach 19.41 MMT, equivalent to 12.69 MMT of milled rice. This is a decrease from the total palay output of 20.06 MMT in 2023.

A metric ton is equivalent to 1,000 kilograms.

Damages. According to their initial assessment, the DA estimates that rice and corn plantations in the Bicol Region, particularly Camarines Sur and Camarines Norte, have suffered agricultural damage amounting to P9.75 million.

Severe Tropical Storm Kristine has impacted 234 farmers and 209 hectares of agricultural land, with two-thirds of this area expected to be irreparable. Projected production losses include 591 metric tons of palay and 7.50 metric tons of corn.

Response. The DA Regional Field Offices (RFO) are actively monitoring damage, issuing advisories to local stakeholders, conducting price assessments and mobilizing logistical support for affected communities.

The agency is also providing assistance by distributing agricultural inputs, including rice, corn, vegetable seeds, and biologics or medicine for livestock, across Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol, Eastern Visayas, and Caraga.

Farmers can access loans of up to P25,000 through the Agricultural Credit Policy Council's Survival and Recovery Loan Program, with a repayment period of up to three years and no interest.

Financial reimbursement from the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation will also be available for insured farmers affected by agricultural losses.

Although the DA is not worried about the country's rice stocks despite agricultural damages, farmers are more concerned about their ability to recover financially from anticipated lower palay prices and damaged plantations.

Concerns over declining palay prices

Farmers in the Bicol region are troubled about the decline in palay prices, saying that current rates, which they believe may drop to P15 per kilogram, will not yield any profit for them.

This situation is exacerbated by the storm's damage to their rice plantations, which were supposed to be ready for harvest in November.

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, the average farmgate price of palay in the country by the end of the third quarter stands at P23.41 per kilogram, a decrease from P24.65 per kilogram in the second quarter.

The Bicol Region also has one of the lowest average farmgate prices for palay, with a kilogram priced at only P21.85.

In a statement on Thursday, October 24, Amihan National Federation of Peasant Women (Amihan Women) called for an increase in farmgate prices of palay, saying that farmers are struggling to bring food to the table with debts incurred from their agricultural investments on top of low earnings.

A Laguna-based farmer shared with the peasant group that they typically require a capital of P60,000 to P70,000 to cultivate one hectare of rice land.

“Bago [ito] mahinog, mabubulok na ang ilalim dahil sa lubog sa tubig, babaratin kami at posibleng bilhin lang sa amin ng P10 kada kilo ang palay,” the farmer said.

(Before it ripens, the bottom will start to rot due to being submerged in water, so we might be bought for just P10 per kilo for the palay.)

The farmer estimates that their earnings will be only one-fourth of what they could have made because of Kristine.

Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas on Wednesday said that farmers have not even recovered from Typhoon Enteng which ravaged the country in September.

“Dagdag pa rito ang mabagal at di-sapat na tugon ng pamahalaan para alalayan ang mga apektadong magsasaka,” KMP Chairperson Danilo Ramos said in a statement.

(On top of the disaster is the government's slow and inadequate response to assist affected farmers.)

As of 5 p.m. on Thursday, several provinces in Northern Luzon were under Signal No. 3, with Kristine located over the coastal waters of Ilocos Sur. Most regions in Luzon and Visayas are under Signal No. 2 and Signal No. 1.

Severe Tropical Storm Kristine is anticipated to exit the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) by Friday, October 25.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/10/24/2394991/despite-sufficient-rice-supply-farmers-fear-low-prices-after-kristine-losses>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

‘Review FTAs to make higher salt tariff effective’

[Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas](#) - The Philippine Star

October 25, 2024 | 12:00am



Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food Inc. president Danilo Fausto pointed out that the increase in salt tariff to nine percent from one percent would not make significant impact on the domestic industry since most of the imported supplies enter the country tariff-free under FTAs.

STAR / Edd Gumban

MANILA, Philippines — The government should review some of its free trade agreements (FTAs) to ensure that the higher salt tariff rate would make an impact on the lives of local salt farmers, stakeholders said.

Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food Inc. president Danilo Fausto pointed out that the increase in salt tariff to nine percent from one percent would not make significant impact on the domestic industry since most of the imported supplies enter the country tariff-free under FTAs.

“There is a need to review tariff agreements if we are serious in developing the affected industries. Or else, laws that were passed giving support to industries will be useless,” Fausto told The STAR.

The STAR earlier reported that the government has started to impose higher tariff rate on imported salt pursuant to Republic Act 11985 or the Philippine Salt Industry Development Act.

Under the law, tariffs collected from imported salt products would be earmarked for the development of the local salt industry for the next 10 years.

However, experts cautioned that salt tariff collections would remain meager since most of the imported salt products are covered by FTAs, thus, entering the country tariff-free.

Marie Annette Dacul, executive director of University of Asia and the Pacific's Center for Food and Agri Business, said the challenge for the government is to identify "alternative" approaches to "strengthen" the local salt industry to reduce reliance on tariff collections.

"The (nine percent) tariff is expected to have a limited impact, as most of the Philippines' salt imports are from countries with FTAs that would not be affected," Dacul said.

"Still, any tariff is better than a zero tariff, as it has the potential to yield some revenue," she added.

Philippine Statistics Authority data showed that the top four salt exporters to the Philippines – Australia, China, Thailand and New Zealand – are all covered by FTAs.

For example, Australia, the country's top foreign supplier, shipped \$27.592 million of salt to the Philippines last year, all of which entered the country tariff-free.

Australia accounted for at least three-fourths of the \$36.571-million total value of salt products imported by the country, based on PSA data.

Customs records showed that only P240.845 million out of the total P2.456 billion worth of salt imports last year were slapped with tariffs.

From the P240.845 million, the BOC only collected P2.43 million worth of salt tariffs.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/10/25/2395012/review-ftas-make-higher-salt-tariff-effective>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Kristine agri damage reaches P80.80 million

By: [Jordeene B. Lagare @jordeenelagare](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 08:38 AM October 25, 2024



A drone shot of rice fields submerged in flood following the onslaught of Severe Tropical Storm Kristine (Tram) in Camarines Sur on Wednesday (Oct. 23, 2024). The Department of Agriculture has recorded P80.80 million worth of damage to agriculture in four regions, affecting 2,864 farmers. | PHOTO: Official Facebook page of Naga City Government via PNA

The country's agriculture sector sustained P80.80 million in losses due to the onslaught of Severe Tropical Storm Kristine (international name: Trami), the Department of Agriculture (DA) said.

In its bulletin issued on Thursday afternoon, the DA said Kristine has affected 2,864 farmers in Cordillera, Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, Palawan), Bicol and Western Visayas.

The volume of production loss is estimated at 5,287 metric tons covering 1,570 hectares of agricultural land.

“As field assessments continue, further damage and losses are anticipated, potentially impacting additional commodities,” the DA said.

The agency has prepared various interventions for those affected:

- **P80.21 million worth of agricultural inputs (rice, corn, and vegetable seeds, drugs and biologics for livestock) from DA Regional Field Offices CAR, III, IV-A, IV-B, V, and VIII;**
- **Up to P25,000 loanable amount from the Survival and Recovery (SURE) Loan Program of the Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC), payable in three years at zero interest; and**
- **Indemnification of insured affected farmers through the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. (PCIC)**

<https://business.inquirer.net/486563/kristine-agri-damage-reaches-p80-80-million>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

PH secures World Bank commitment to improve agri sector

By: [Anna Leah Gonzales](#) -

[Philippine News Agency](#) / 02:45 PM October 24, 2024



CONTINUED SUPPORT. National Treasurer Sharon Almanza, Finance Secretary Ralph Recto, and Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. (seated, right panel) participate in a high-level dialogue with top officials of the World Bank Group. The meeting was held on the sidelines of the World Bank – International Monetary Fund Annual meetings in Washington DC on Oct. 22, 2024. | PHOTO: Official Facebook page of DOF

MANILA – Finance Secretary Ralph Recto said the World Bank group has committed to boosting the Philippine agriculture sector and human capital development.

In a statement on Thursday, the Department of Finance (DOF) said the World Bank made the commitment during a high-level dialogue with top officials of the World Bank Group (WBG) in Washington DC on Oct. 22.

The meeting took place on the sidelines of the WB – International Monetary Fund Annual Meetings held in Washington, D.C. from Oct. 22 to 25.

During the meeting led by Regional Vice President for East Asia and the Pacific Manuela Ferro, the WBG committed to continue supporting projects that aim to increase Filipino farmers' productivity and income.

The World Bank also committed to helping the Philippines modernize its agriculture sector to make it more commercially viable and export-oriented.

Recto welcomed the bank's assistance, noting that accelerating the expansion of the agriculture sector would help further reduce inflation and boost the country's economic growth.

During the meeting, the WBG reaffirmed its support for the country's human capital development, especially in education.

The World Bank also recognized that investor confidence in the Philippines remains strong on the back of business-friendly reforms.

Recto said the Philippines has great potential to integrate into the global supply chain of high-value manufacturing, especially in the semiconductor industry.

He also urged the World Bank to provide more assistance in strengthening the country's cybersecurity, as well as grants and technical assistance for project preparation to improve the delivery of WBG-funded projects.

Recto, likewise, reiterated his call for the WBG to provide more concessional financing.

The World Bank, on the other hand, said its Board recently approved the introduction of grace periods in paying commitment fees and the removal of prepayment premiums.

It also said that another package of pricing reform is under discussion that would further reduce borrowing costs.

The DOF said the World Bank assured that the Philippine government's priorities would be reflected in the new Philippine country partnership framework for 2025 to 2028.

As of June, the World Bank's International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) is the Philippines' third-largest official development assistance (ODA) partner, with a total ODA amounting to \$8.84 billion.

This represents 18.8 percent of the Philippines' total ODA.

Recto was joined by Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.; Finance Undersecretary Domini Velasquez; National Treasurer Sharon Almanza; WBG Alternate Executive Director Erwin Sta. Ana; and OIC Assistant Secretary Donalyn Minimo.

Representing the WBG were Vice President for Infrastructure Guangzhe Chen; Vice President for Digital Transformation Sangbu Kim; Vice President for the Planet Vice Presidency Juergen Voegelé; East Asia and Pacific Regional Director for Human Development Alberto Rodriguez; Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia Region in Equitable Growth, Finance and Institutions Lalita Moorty; Country Director for the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei Zafer Mustafaoğlu; and IFC Country Manager for the Philippines Jean-Marc Arbogast. (PNA)

<https://business.inquirer.net/486405/ph-secures-world-bank-commitment-to-improve-agri-sector>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

World Bank pledges more support for PH

By: [Mariedel Irish U. Catilogo](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 02:30 AM October 25, 2024

The World Bank Group (WBG) has pledged to support the Marcos administration's agriculture and human capital development programs and projects to draw in more private investments, according to the Department of Finance (DOF).

“Accelerating the expansion of the agriculture sector will help further reduce inflation and grow the economy faster,” Finance Secretary Ralph Recto said during the 2024 World Bank-International Monetary Fund annual meetings in Washington, D.C.

To fast-track the implementation of WBG-funded projects meant to increase the output and income of Filipino farmers and modernize the vital agriculture sector, Recto asked the World Bank (WB) for more grants and technical assistance for project preparation.

As the WB is looking at another round of pricing reforms to reduce borrowing costs, Recto called on the multilateral lender to consider granting grace periods for commitment fees and eliminating prepayment penalties.

New partnership

WBG managing director of operations Anna Bjerde assured the government that these key priorities of the Marcos administration would be taken into consideration as the bank finalizes the new country partnership framework for 2025 to 2028.

The WB's International Bank for Reconstruction and Development is the Philippines' third-largest official development assistance (ODA) partner.

The WB's \$8.84 billion in ODA accounts for 18.86 percent of the country's total ODA as of June.

The WB also assured the government of continuing support for improving human capital development in the Philippines, especially in education, to help the country benefit from its growing population.

Recto likewise called for more investments in renewable energy to facilitate the country's green transition.

The finance chief also requested the WB's support in enhancing cybersecurity, a vital component of the DOF's digitalization program designed to improve revenue collection and public service delivery.

Bjerde also emphasized that the WBG's recently launched High-Level Advisory Council on Jobs will help the Philippines further improve its jobs market.

This is a new initiative that will identify actionable policies and programs to address challenges in job creation, focusing on youth and female employment opportunities.

<https://business.inquirer.net/486443/wb-pledges-more-support-for-ph>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

World Bank aims to double agribusiness commitment by 2030

Agence France-Presse / 02:23 PM October 24, 2024



The World Bank Group logo is seen on the building of the Washington-based global development lender in Washington on January 17, 2019. (FILE photo by Eric BARADAT / Agence France-Presse)

Washington, United States — The World Bank plans to double its commitment to the agribusiness sector to \$9 billion each year by 2030 as part of a push to create jobs in developing economies, the bank’s president said Wednesday.

Ajay Banga, who took over the 80-year-old development lender last year, told an event at the Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank in Washington that there were some important shifts taking place in the agribusiness sector. These include the growing risks to agriculture from climate change, and the creation of new financial tools for “derisking” the sector that should help boost private sector funding. The shifts in the sector have arrived “at a time of extraordinary opportunity as global food demand is set to increase by 50 to 60 percent in the coming decades,” he said. The bank, Banga said, was “combining a new way of working with a new level of investment — doubling our agrifinance and agribusiness commitments to \$9 billion annually by 2030.” The World Bank president said the agribusiness sector would also help create jobs in developing economies, something

he has looked to champion during these meetings. “The effort to transform agribusiness is not only about securing the food systems of tomorrow — it is fundamentally a jobs initiative,” he said, noting that 1.2 billion young people in developing countries will enter the workforce in the next decade, but that only 420 million jobs are projected to be created. “We stand at a crossroads, and the path we choose today will determine the future,” he said. “By transforming agriculture and agribusiness, we can create the food system of tomorrow, raise living standards, and create jobs.”

<https://business.inquirer.net/486372/world-bank-aims-to-double-agribusiness-commitment-by-2030>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Oriental Mindoro suffers P7.1M farm losses due to Kristine

By: [Madonna T. Virola](#) - Correspondent / [@mvirolaINO](#)

[Inquirer Southern Luzon](#) / 02:11 PM October 24, 2024



INQUIRER FILES

CITY OF CALAPAN — Oriental Mindoro suffered P7.1-million agricultural losses due to Severe Tropical Storm Kristine (international name: Trami) as of Thursday, October 2, the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office reported.

Flooding was recorded in 29 villages across five towns: Victoria (4 villages), Socorro (18), Pola (3), Pinamalayan (1), and Naujan (3). Landslides were also reported in Victoria and Socorro.

Calapan's Sto. Niño Cathedral has circulated the Oratio Imperata, a prayer for deliverance from calamities, on social media as the community seeks protection during the storm.

While all roads remain passable and rivers are at normal to above-normal levels, port operations in the province have been suspended, with Oriental Mindoro currently under Tropical Cyclone Wind Signal No. 1.

Structural damage included two houses that were totally destroyed—one in Pola and another in Victoria. Five homes were damaged, with two in Naujan and three in Puerto Galera. Three roads sustained damage—two in Pola and one in Socorro.

Classes at all levels in public and private schools and government office operations remain suspended on Thursday due to the storm.

Gov. Eduardo Gadiano issued Executive Order No. 55, suspending classes and work in public and private institutions throughout the province on Friday due to the ongoing impact of the storm.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1996746/oriental-mindoro-suffers-p7-1m-farm-losses-due-to-kristine>

BUSINESS WORLD:

AI seen improving ASF vaccine development

October 24, 2024 | 9:01 pm



REUTERS

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) is helping improve the development of vaccines for livestock diseases like the African Swine Fever (ASF), a professor from the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) said.

“Through machine learning, we can bolster our ability to study the discovery, evolution, and diversity of viruses,” Homer Pantua, a professor with the UPLB Institute of Biological Sciences, said in a forum on Thursday.

A recent resurgence of ASF cases around the country prompted the government to fast track its vaccine procurement and rollout to hog farmers.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) allocated P350 million to procure 600,000 doses for hog farmers. The limited rollout started in Batangas on Aug. 30.

However, farmers have said onerous eligibility requirements are delaying their participation in the vaccination program.

Mr. Pantua said researchers need to optimize sample collection and data documentation to produce better data in addressing animal diseases.

“We propose that machine learning guided applications can help support vaccine research and also help in making careful analyses of the virus origin and evolution,” he added.

He cited research findings indicating that ASF strains in the Philippines have evolved “either temporally or geographically.”

He added that better data input could allow scientists to “rapidly and objectively identify good vaccine candidates.”

So far, only the AVAC ASF Live vaccine from Vietnam has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration for a government-controlled rollout.

Last week, the DA allowed commercial hog farms to participate in the vaccination program amid delays in inoculation.

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/10/24/630538/ai-seen-improving-asf-vaccine-development/>

REMATE:

P10M agri damage ng Bagyong Kristine sa Bicol

October 24, 2024 14:45



MANILA, Philippines – PUMALO na sa P10 milyong halaga ng inisyal na pinsala sa agrikultura sa Bicol region ang naitala ng Department of Agriculture-Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Operations Center dahil sa Severe Tropical Storm Kristine (international name: Trami).

“Based on the initial assessment of the DA Regional Field Office in Bicol Region, damage and losses have been reported in rice and corn amounting to PHP9.75 million affecting 234 farmers,” ang nakasaad sa kalatas ng DA-DRRM.

Tinatayang, mayroon namang 598 metric tons (MT) sa 209 ektarya ng rice at corn plantation ang naiulat na napinsala, pagkawala sa rice production na 203 MT na nagkakahalaga ng P9.6 milyon sa Camarines Norte.

Samantala, sa sektor ng mais, 7.50 MT ang nawala sa Camarines Sur na nagkakahalaga ng P167,000.

Tiniyak naman ng DA na mamamagitan ito sa mga apektadong magsasaka kabilang na ang pamamahagi ng agricultural inputs para sa bigas, mais at high-value crops kabilang ang ‘seedlings, drugs, at biologics; P25,000 loanable na halaga para sa kada magsasaka na puwedeng bayaran sa loob ng tatlong taon na may zero interest; at indemnification ng insured farmers sa pamamagitan ng Philippine Crop Insurance Industry (PCIC). *Kris Jose*

<https://remate.ph/p10m-agri-damage-ng-bagyong-kristine-sa-bicol/>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Panay dams feasibility study nears completion

By Rjay Zuriaga Castor

October 25, 2024

ILOILO CITY — The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) reported that it has achieved 91.18 percent completion of the feasibility study (FS) of the Panay River Basin Integrated Development Project (PRBIDP) in Capiz.

NIA-6 director Engr. Jonel Borres said the conduct of FS is simultaneous with the project's detailed engineering design phase.

Borres said the significant progress in the FS brings the project closer to construction, which is expected to commence in 2025.

"Personally, I am hoping that by next year we can already start with the construction because NIA-6 is doing its best to get all the permits as soon as possible," said Borres during a press conference on Tuesday

Borres said they are currently processing necessary permits from the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and Department of Agrarian Reform to expedite the construction.

He stressed that securing all the permits before the construction stage will ensure the project's completion on time.

NIA has already obtained two Certification Precondition (CP) from the NCIP since June 2018 but a new CP has been renewed due to the delays in the conduct of the FS.

The CP is in compliance with the Free and Prior Informed Consent with the Indigenous Cultural Communities or Indigenous Peoples (IPs) to be affected by the project.

"We are very optimistic about this project. The IPs and all the stakeholders in Capiz are really looking forward to this project because of the perennial problem of flooding," he emphasized.

Borres also disclosed that they are also updating the programs and works of the PRBIDP to update the project's cost to consider the current market prices. PRBIDP has a proposed project cost of P20.786 billion. The NIA is proposing to construct PRBIDP under the Design-and-Build (DB) scheme, where the contractor will be responsible for both the design and construction of the project.

The DB method allows NIA to focus on setting minimum performance standards, while the contractor ensures compliance.

"We will no longer go through the process of securing loans because the top management is keen on finishing the project and the president is also supportive of this infrastructure," Borres added.

The PRBIDP aims to address the recurring issue of flooding in Capiz and enhance water resources management. A dam will be constructed in Barangay Acuna, Tapaz, with an afterbay dam in Barangay Garcia.

The project's irrigation component will benefit 25,046 farmers by irrigating 26,800 hectares of farmland. It will also generate 18.42 megawatts of hydroelectric power and supply 3 cubic meters per second of bulk water to Roxas City and surrounding areas.

https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/10/25/regions/panay-dams-feasibility-study-nears-completion/1990982?fbclid=IwY2xjawGLwQhleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHejTmTLN5zBqYaPhzFtvB2cd0_3TPd0xXT1Zn0EPVSZS-AK7U_Aj2Ky8tA_aem_mFSWLNzEpUhmXcNQMBcLdA

THE MANILA TIMES:

Farm clustering and consolidation

By Dr. Fermin D. Adriano, PhD

October 25, 2024

OUTSIDE of raising land ownership ceiling or allowing the land market to work again, the only way our agriculture sector will have a chance of developing is to cluster and consolidate the lands tilled by our small-scale farmers.

Adamopoulos and Restuccia (2019) revealed that the prolonged implementation of agrarian reform resulted in the decrease of farm sizes by 34 percent. No wonder that the average land size cultivated by Filipino farmers is around a hectare. As a result, the two authors noted that Philippine agricultural productivity declined by 17 percent because no economies of scale could be achieved with these miniscule farm sizes.

Otsuka (2021) added that the "decrease in farm sizes is particularly pronounced in the Philippines partly because of rapid population growth and partly because of failure of growth of [the] nonfarm sector, which can absorb rural labor." He warned that, "If this trend in farm sizes continues and the economy sustains a fairly high growth rate, the agricultural sector's inefficiency can be a major constraint to further economic growth."

Evidently, the primary solution to the laggard performance of agriculture is farm clustering and consolidation. The reasons are clear: this will allow the use of modern farm machinery and technology that a small-scale farmer tilling a hectare of land cannot afford. It will enable farmers' organizations to engage in bulk buying of inputs, which will lower their input costs. It will allow farmers organizations to invest, maintain and operate postharvest facilities that will reduce postharvest losses and improve the quality of their products. Small-scale farmers will be in a stronger position to negotiate with traders a fair price for their produce.

Lest it be misunderstood, farm clustering means consolidating contiguous lands for proper production and harvesting scheduling. It does not involve consolidation of land property rights to a single individual or a company. Farm consolidation, meanwhile, is defined as providing a central management to operate the farms efficiently in terms of the proper timing of planting activities, the crop variety to be planted, inputs to be applied, technology to be used, etc.

To be successful, farm clustering and consolidation must be accompanied by a strong program of organizing the farmers. Clustering farms by itself will not work if the farmers and their relatives do not cooperate in the pursuit of the collective good of the organization or community. The problem, however, is that the government's stated thrust of promoting farm clustering and consolidation is not accompanied by organizing activities. Expectedly, supposedly clustered farms only exist when dole outs are to be received from the government.

Farm clustering and consolidation is the *deus ex machina* for other reform measures to transform Philippine agriculture into a modern and progressive sector to become successful. For instance, successive projects promoting mechanization of our farms have not succeeded since the time of former president Benigno Aquino under the "Agri-Makina" project because there are no strong clustered farms and farmers organizations that will receive and properly maintain tractors and machines.

A study commissioned by former agriculture secretary William Dar to assess previous farm mechanization projects found that only around 20 percent of the machines distributed were operational after three to five years because the recipient farmer organizations and individuals did not set aside funds for maintenance and proper operations.

It is the same situation for previously distributed postharvest facilities and even communal irrigation systems, which are hardly operational now since these have broken down due to misuse and the lack of

maintenance funds. The free irrigation policy worsened the neglect of communal irrigation systems because there were no funds that local government units could use to maintain and operate them properly. Farmers, being used to dole outs from the government, thought that the maintenance and operating costs of the machines and equipment would be provided by the government.

Maximum gains from the use of modern technologies such as drones, bigger and more efficient farm machines, and from agricultural research and development can only be realized if farmlands are clustered into economically viable size of hundreds or even thousands of hectares.

The case of the rice sector clearly illustrates why if left fragmented into miniscule farm sizes, the rice industry will never become efficient and competitive. Despite more than half of the Department of Agriculture's budget being spent on rice productivity enhancement, our average harvest has not dramatically increased and is now just pegged at around 4.2 metric tons per hectare compared to Vietnam's 5.8 metric tons per hectare.

In addition, government subsidies to small rice farmers amount to around 40 percent of their total production cost in the form of free seeds, irrigation water, fertilizer, and in some cases, cash assistance. A cost and return study of palay (unmilled rice) production shows a hefty return to the tiller of more than 20 percent.

Small-scale rice farmers remain poor because their lands are too small to provide adequate income for them. Worse, palay harvests have not increased dramatically because of the nonemployment of modern farm technologies as these are beyond the means of the farmers.

The end result is a low productivity and high poverty trap for our small cultivators. A way out for them is to cultivate high value crops in between rice planting season or totally shift to the cultivation of high-value crops as these command higher prices. But this will require educating farmers how to grow such crops properly and in assisting them to find markets. Both are lacking in the current government's rice program because of its focus on increasing rice productivity instead of the farmers income and welfare.

Recently, it was reported in the media that the US Department of Agriculture had raised its rice import forecast for the Philippines for 2025 to 4.9 million metric tons.

This is equivalent to around 30 percent of the country's total consumption demand. If this happens, this will be a historic high for the country. More recently, the Social Weather Stations reported that the incidence of involuntary hunger reached to around 23 percent this September, the highest since the peak of the Covid pandemic four years ago. The main culprit is undoubtedly high food prices because of the underdeveloped and poor performance of our agricultural sector for over two decades now.

Otsuka's statement, which we cited at the beginning of this column, has indeed become prophetic. All because our farms remain fragmented with miniscule plots tended by small farmers using mostly rudimentary technologies.

fdadriano88@gmail.com

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/10/25/business/top-business/farm-clustering-and-consolidation/1991023>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

House confident Senate will keep key 2025 budget items on food security, safety nets

Jovee Marie N. de la Cruz
October 25, 2024

THE House of Representatives listed the key amendments, aimed at bolstering social safety nets and ensuring food security, that are embodied in the P6.352-trillion proposed 2025 General Appropriations Act it transmitted to the Senate.

Ako Bicol Party-list Representative Zaldy Co, chair of the House Committee on Appropriations, said the amendments include an additional P292.23 billion dedicated to supporting vulnerable sectors, including low-income families, farmers, and soldiers.

“This budget is a lifeline for those who need it most. By increasing funding for social programs, we’re addressing immediate needs while laying the groundwork for long-term resilience,” Co said.

Significant enhancements in the budget include an extra P39.8 billion allocated to the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS) and the Ayuda sa Kapos ang Kita Program (AKAP), which will offer financial aid to those earning P21,000 or less monthly. The AKAP allocation for 2025 is three times higher than the previous year’s P13 billion, in response to widespread public demand.

Education remains a priority, with an additional P30.01 billion earmarked for scholarships under the Commission on Higher Education’s Tertiary Education Subsidy and Tulong Dunong programs. Meanwhile, the Department of Education will receive P7 billion more for the construction and repair of school facilities.

To bolster national security, P8.44 billion has been added to the Armed Forces of the Philippines’ budget, raising soldiers’ daily subsistence allowance by 67 percent to P250. Funding is also allocated for critical infrastructure projects on Pag-asa Island to defend the West Philippine Sea.

In agriculture, P30 billion is directed toward irrigation and cold storage projects to enhance food security, while the National Irrigation Administration's budget sees a P44 billion increase.

The amended budget now awaits Senate deliberations, with lawmakers expressing optimism about its swift passage.

The HOR sent the 2025 GAB to the Senate at the height of typhoon Kristine on Thursday, as both chambers have committed to the timely enactment of the measure.

The Senate leadership earlier said all members will focus on the GAB deliberations once sessions resume after the "Undas" holidays, as major inquiries in aid of legislation are being wrapped up. The only other major investigation, to be opened on Monday (October 28) by a special subpanel of the Blue Ribbon Committee, dwells on the Duterte-era drug wars and extrajudicial killings.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/10/25/house-confident-senate-will-keep-key-2025-budget-items-on-food-security-safety-nets/?fbclid=IwY2xjawGLwLVleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHZ417MF4Ulc2RWec1oNvHLS hDIXX4ilfbKcCP1d9vvTivReRF9RtKA J-g aem TfjZuMpjqLpeXl2gHIrqQ>